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42

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**Editor:** Jenny Curran  
**Art Editor:** Chantal Newell  
**Section Editors:** Carey Denton,  
Christine Hatt, Amanda Maclean,  
Vanessa Morgan  
**Deputy Art Editor:** Andy Archer  
**Designer:** Jessica Watts  
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Next week in

**THE**  
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Collection

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# THE ABDUCTION



his story isn't about me, Margaret Shane. It's about  
my friend, Debbie O'Malley. It's about how she gave  
me and everyone else at Jefferson Secondary School  
a scare we'll never forget.

Now, I'd known Debbie ever since primary school.  
She'd always been a smart girl, and lots of fun to be with.  
Whether the subject was music, shopping, films, or boys,  
Debbie always had something to say, and she often gave her  
opinions in truly unforgettable ways. This is because Debbie  
O'Malley was a liar. No, I take that back. A liar is someone  
who intentionally tells untruths hoping to deceive the listener.  
It was different with Debbie. When she spun her wild stories,  
you got the feeling that she actually believed them. Or, at least,  
she wanted to believe them... desperately.

For example, one day my friends and I were sitting around  
the dinner table talking about the new CD just released by the  
band Poison Oak. We all agreed that, except for two or three bad  
tracks, most of the songs were pretty good. Naturally, Debbie  
had to take it one step further.

"You know, I went to school with the lead singer of Poison  
Oak," she said matter-of-factly.





"Yeah, right," scoffed Paula Lang, who was always the first among us to doubt anything that Debbie ever said. "And where was this?"

"In Brighton," Debbie replied, without even batting an eyelid. "We were in the first year together. Mrs Prescott's class."

Again, Debbie was on the mark. From what I knew about Poison Oak, the band was from Brighton.

"I thought you went to boarding school in Scotland," said Sarah Day, trying to catch Debbie in a contradiction. "That's what you told us last week."

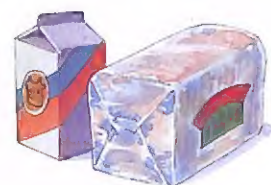
"That was just my first term," Debbie explained confidently. "I finished the year in Brighton. You know how it is when your father's a top agent with the M15. You're moving all the time."

"What do you think we are, Debbie, stupid?" Paula exclaimed, grabbing her lunch and storming off.



I turned to Debbie and saw only hurt and confusion on her face. It was like this every time someone accused her of being a liar. She looked so pained, so innocent – like she was deeply wounded by our distrust of her, even though she'd done everything possible to earn our suspicion.

Maybe it was just that Debbie didn't want to have to face the harsh realities of her own life. You see, the fact was, both of Debbie's parents had been killed by a drunk driver when she was just six years old. Since then, she had lived in a small two-bedroom bungalow with her auntie, who worked as an assistant manager at the local supermarket. Debbie's life was so ordinary, so colourless, that I really couldn't blame her for wanting to escape into a fantasy world.



**A**nyway, the Poison Oak incident was soon forgotten, and we all went back to our normal business. Then one day, Debbie O'Malley failed to show up for lunch. Concerned, I asked both Paula and Sarah if either one of them had seen her, but neither had. Later, I looked for her in PE class, which was the only class we shared, but again she failed to appear. I quickly concluded she was off sick and would be back in school tomorrow.

But it wasn't until two weeks later that Debbie finally returned. Naturally, we were all relieved to see her alive and well, but on second glance, I realised that she didn't look well at all. In fact, the girl looked awful. Her complexion was

pale, her posture stooped, and her eyes had a weird, faraway look to them.

"Debbie, where have you been?" I asked as she joined us at our usual table in the dining room. "Were you ill? If you were, you still don't look too good."

"No, Margaret, I wasn't ill," Debbie replied, her voice so low it was barely even a whisper.

"So what's the story?" asked Paula, leaning forwards with interest. "Did you get kidnapped by pirates?"

"No, Paula, not pirates," Debbie responded softly.

The other girls and I exchanged nervous glances. Something had happened to our friend, something that, by the looks of her, was pretty awful.

"You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to," I said kindly.

"No, that's all right," Debbie said, finally looking up. "I think I should talk about it."

"All right," said Sarah, taking a spoonful of yoghurt. "We're listening."

Debbie paused for a moment to collect herself. Then she took a deep breath and began to tell her tale.



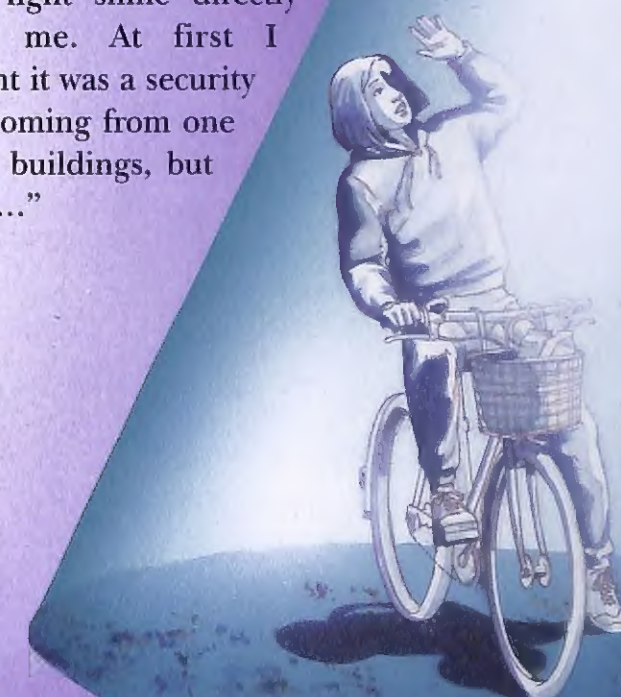
**I**t started about two weeks ago on a Tuesday night," she began, referring to the last day we had met for lunch. "After tea, Auntie Betty realised we were out of milk and bread, and she asked me to pick some up. As usual, I took my bike."

She paused for a moment to take a sip from her drink. In the seconds that

elapsed, I imagined her being run off the road by some crazy bikers or grabbed by some fiend in a black van.

"Anyway, I went down Enterprise Way because that's the fastest way to get to the shop," Debbie said, referring to a street filled with small industrial buildings, mostly car repair shops and the like. "This was after seven o'clock, so there was no other traffic on the street. All the businesses were closed down, and the only light around came from the street lamps."

Debbie's voice began to get shaky. "I was halfway down the street when I noticed a bright white light shine directly above me. At first I thought it was a security light coming from one of the buildings, but then I..."



"Was it a police helicopter?" Paula Lang interrupted. "They're always flying over our house, lighting up the neighbourhood and making lots of noise."

"That's what I'd thought," Debbie agreed. "But there weren't any helicopter sounds. There wasn't any sound at all."



"Were you scared?" Sarah asked, now listening with rapt attention.

"Terrified," Debbie admitted with a nervous laugh. "I knew something was wrong. I knew I had to get out of there as fast as I could."

"So what happened?" I asked, knowing the events in her story were only going to get spookier.

"I tried to cycle as fast as I could, but I couldn't move," Debbie replied. "It was like all of my muscles were suddenly frozen tight. No matter how hard I tried to get out of there, I was stuck to the spot."

Again, Debbie paused to take a sip of drink while we all waited in anxious silence.

"I must have stood there with my bike for ten, maybe twenty seconds, each second more terrifying than the next," Debbie said, carefully measuring each word. "Then I felt myself being lifted up."



"What?" Paula cried in disbelief. "That is the most unbelievable thing I've..."

"Let her talk, Paula!" I snapped, caught up in the story as though it was a suspense thriller. Then I turned back to Debbie. "It's all right, Deb. Go on."

Debbie smiled at me as if to say "thanks," then continued. "I looked down and could see my bike on the street below. It was getting farther and farther away with each second. Then, all of a sudden, I was inside this small, bright room. The walls looked like they were made out of smooth, frosted glass, and there was this large machine in the centre of the room that looked like some kind of weird X-ray machine."

Instinctively, I held my breath. I had seen enough reports about UFOs on TV to know that Debbie was describing a classic 'alien abduction'. Apparently, Paula and Sarah were thinking the same thing, for they were now regarding Debbie with expressions of doubt and scepticism. But considering this was Debbie O'Malley talking, that was par for the course.



**S**till, as familiar as her story was, there was a level of sincerity in her voice I had never heard during any of her other tall tales. Usually, Debbie had a cool, offhand way of telling her stories that indicated she knew you might not believe her but that she didn't care. This time, however, there was genuine terror in her voice, and it told me that even if the story wasn't true, Debbie herself was absolutely convinced it was.

"I still couldn't move. I couldn't even talk," Debbie went on, her words now coming at a faster pace as she relived the abduction – real or imagined – in her own mind. "Several small beings appeared and led me over to the examination table, where they made me lie down. The creatures were only about one metre tall. They had large, bald heads, black eyes like an insect's, and grey skin that looked like smooth leather."

Again, I knew Debbie was describing a classic 'gray', the type of extraterrestrial most commonly associated with UFO abductions. I'd seen the whole thing on a UFO TV programme once. Anyway, if I was right, Debbie would now go on to describe a harrowing series of medical experiments, which is exactly what she did.

Now, I won't go into details here, but take it from me, they were pretty gruesome. The experiments involved her being poked and prodded with long needles. As she told the story, her body shivered and tears welled up in her eyes.

"They were putting something up my nose when I finally blacked out," Debbie said. "When I woke up, I found myself in the middle of the corn field near Arbott Road. A policeman found me walking along in a daze and took me home. That was two days ago."

"You mean, you were on that spaceship for an entire week?" I gasped in disbelief.

"I think so," Debbie said with a shrug. "It didn't seem that long, but who knows? After I blacked out, I could have been

unconscious for days and never even have known I was living with aliens."

"Why do you think they chose you?" Sarah asked, raising a questioning eyebrow.

"I don't know," Debbie confessed. "They took all kinds of samples from all over my body. Maybe they wanted my DNA or something."

"You wouldn't happen to have any proof of this, would you?" Paula asked, folding her arms in a 'prove it' stance. "I mean, you didn't happen to grab a laser gun or an alien oven chip while you were up there by any chance?"

Debbie shook her head in frustration.

"Right," Paula said with a sigh. "You know, Debbie, I always knew you were a space cadet, but this proves it. And if

either of you believe this stupid story," she added, turning to Sarah and me, "then you're just as mad as Debbie."

The next moment, the bell rang and our lunch break was over. Paula and Sarah quickly got up and headed back to class. I waited for Debbie.

"You're going to be OK, aren't you?" I asked. I was worried about her.

"Sure," Debbie replied. "You believe me, don't you, Margaret? You know I'm not making things up this time."

"Deb, you have to admit it is a pretty unbelievable story," I said, somewhat embarrassed. "I mean, it sounds like something straight out of 'Mysterious Encounters'. Maybe you fell asleep in front of the TV and dreamed the whole thing."





"Fine, don't believe me," Debbie snapped. "But I know it happened. I just wish I could prove it."

"So do I, Debbie," I agreed. "So do I."



**W**ord of Debbie O'Malley's so-called 'abduction' spread quickly through the school, and by the time we had PE, all the girls were talking about it. A few girls believed the story, but most were openly sceptical. No, I take that back. They were more than just sceptical, they were downright hostile.

"Hey, O'Malley, when are you going to take us for a ride on your flying saucer?" taunted one of the girls as we warmed up for netball.

"See any little green men lately?" another yelled.

"All right, girls, quiet!" shouted our teacher, Miss Webber, after blowing her whistle. But even as we moved into our positions, all eyes remained on Debbie, who in turn stared down at the ground as if she wanted to be anywhere else but here.

Debbie had never been a star athlete, but today she moved even more awkwardly than usual. When it was her turn to catch the ball, she not only missed it, but it hit her square in the face and she fell to the ground. At first, everyone thought she was fine, but then she didn't get up. Her eyes were wide open and her face was just a complete blank.

I knelt down and took her hand. "Hey, Earth to O'Malley," I said, trying to be funny. "Are you still with us?"

Suddenly, her body gave a convulsive jerk, as if it had just been jolted with electricity. Startled, I released her hand and jumped back to my feet.

"Everyone, get back!" Miss Webber ordered as Debbie's entire body went into uncontrolled spasms. "Someone call 999! Tell them we have a fourteen-year-old girl who's having a seizure!"

Everyone got really freaked out and started running off the court. As we looked back, Debbie's body was sizzling like butter burning in a hot frying pan. Then her features began to melt away as her body sunk in on itself like a deflating balloon.

Several girls screamed and held on to each other, but I was too frightened to even do that. I just stood there and watched in silent terror as my friend – or the thing I thought was my friend – dissolved away into a pile of thick green goo.



It was well after six o'clock when I was finally able to go home. The police had interviewed me and the other members of our PE class for several hours, then some government people came in and did the same thing. I told them Debbie's story about being abducted by aliens, and how none of us had believed her. I ended by telling them that the 'Debbie' we'd talked to had been some kind of clone the aliens had created using her DNA samples. One of the government people called that theory 'imaginative'.

Walking home an hour after sunset, I couldn't help but wonder where the real Debbie O'Malley might be right now. Was she still aboard that strange alien spaceship? Had she been taken to another planet? Or, worst of all, was that pile of steaming slime all that was left of the real Debbie?

I was considering all these terrifying possibilities when, looking down, I noticed my shadow standing out brightly against the street below. Startled, I looked up and saw a hot white light shining down directly above me. And there was no sound.

THE END





## OUR HAUNTED WORLD



This famous old Scottish poem reminds us that weird stuff has always gone on...

*From ghoulies and ghosties  
and long-leggety beasties  
and things that go bump in  
the night, Good Lord,  
deliver us!*

### BIG FOOD FOR THOUGHT

At the Findhorn experimental community during the 1960s and 1970s, massive 20kg cabbages were grown! Many other flowers and plants grew to twice their normal size, despite the poor soil quality and chilly sea winds. The people living there claimed that the garden grew so well because they'd been experimenting in focusing their psychic energy on to the garden!



## SCOTLAND'S SPOOKIEST CASTLE

Built in the 14th century, Glamis Castle (below) boasts more ghosts than any other Scottish castle! Legend has it that when a monstrous heir was born in the early 1800s, he was locked away in a secret chamber until he died, around 150 years later! As more windows can be counted from outside the castle than can ever be found indoors, secret chambers could be an explanation!

Often seen is the ghost of 'Earl Beardie' – said to have played cards with the Devil, to whom he wagered and lost his soul. Other ghosts are: the Grey

Ladies; a tongueless woman who tears at her mouth; a sad-looking woman who is seen clutching a window-frame; a madman who stalks the roof; a vampiric servant who was said to have been walled up alive, plus the ghost of Janet Douglas – burned at the stake in the 1530s for poisoning her husband and trying to poison King James V!



## THE LIGHTHOUSE MYSTERY



In December 1900, Joseph Moore returned to Eilan Mor lighthouse after three weeks' leave, and got a great shock. His three colleagues had vanished without a trace from the lonely Flannan Island lighthouse. The last entry in the lighthouse's log book described a powerful storm, followed by an eerie calm – but not even a minor storm had been recorded in Lewis, just 20 miles away. None of the men were ever seen or heard of again. The story became one of the UK's greatest unsolved mysteries, and was written about in Walter de la Mare's spooky poem, *On Flannan Isle*.

### UPHILL RIDE DOWN

Croy Brae, a hill in Strathclyde, seems to defy the laws of gravity, causing much confusion to drivers! If a driver coming from the north decelerates to go down the hill, the car is likely to grind to a halt. Or, if a driver coming from the south accelerates to go up the hill, the car will start to move dangerously fast! The baffled driver often stops – only to find that the car starts travelling backwards, up the hill! Nearby iron-rich rocks were once blamed for magnetically pulling cars uphill, but no one believes that now. This weird phenomenon occurs in other parts of the world, but scientists have been unable to explain it.

## THE BIG GREY MAN

Ben MacDhui, the 1309m-high mountain in the Cairngorms, is said by many mountaineers to be haunted. Professor

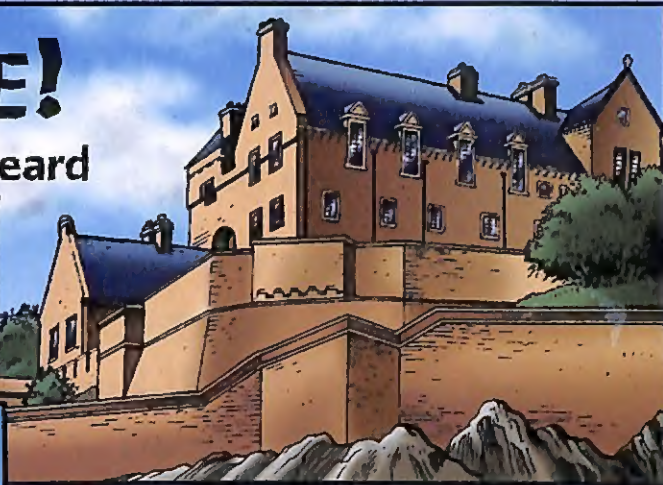
Norman Collie, a famous climber, described how, in 1891, he had heard giant footsteps behind him on Ben MacDhui. In a state of panic and terror, he ran and ran to get away from the evil presence. Other mountaineers then admitted to similar, terrifying experiences at the summit of the lonely mountain. Locals claim that lurking at the top is a huge, ghostly, man-like creature, whose name in Gaelic is *Am Fear Liath Mor* – The Big Grey Man.



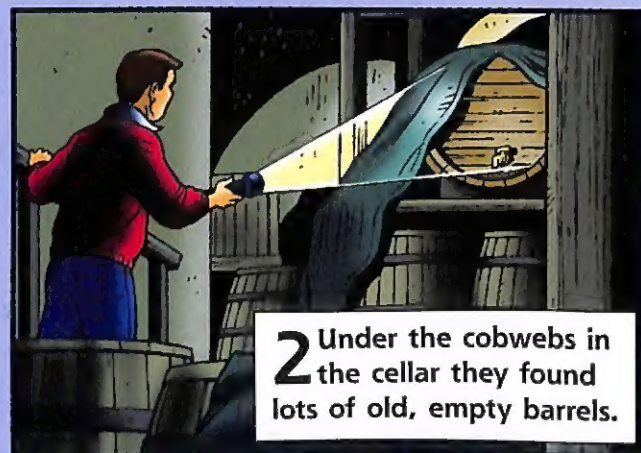


# PARTY PICKLE!

A Scottish friend of a friend heard this tale in Edinburgh...

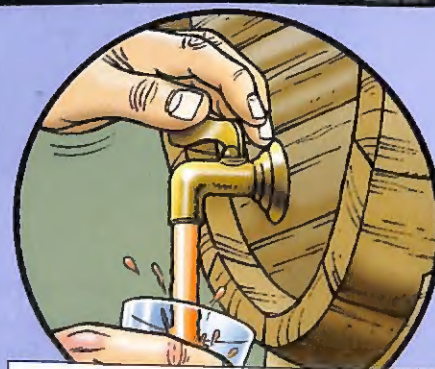


**1** A wealthy young couple had bought a crumbling manor house which they were planning to do up.

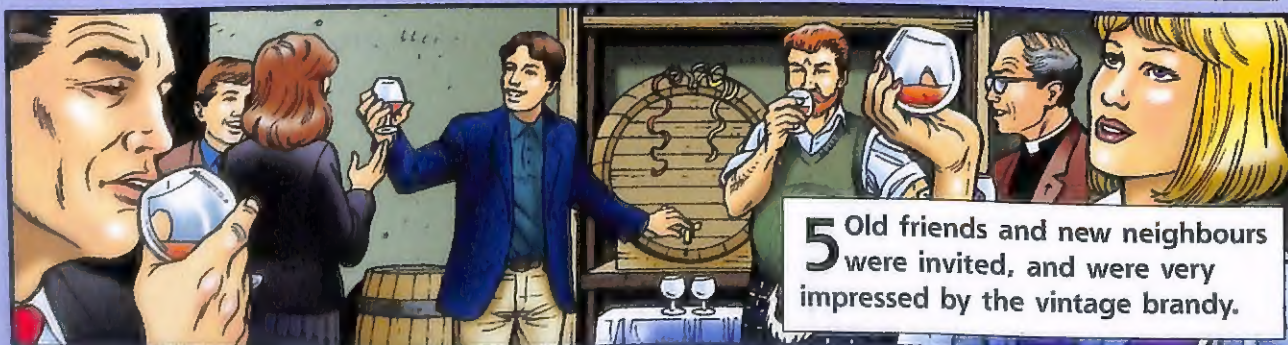


**2** Under the cobwebs in the cellar they found lots of old, empty barrels.

**3** They decided to saw the old barrels in half, then grow plants in them.



**4** On finding a full barrel of brandy, the couple thought they'd celebrate with a party.

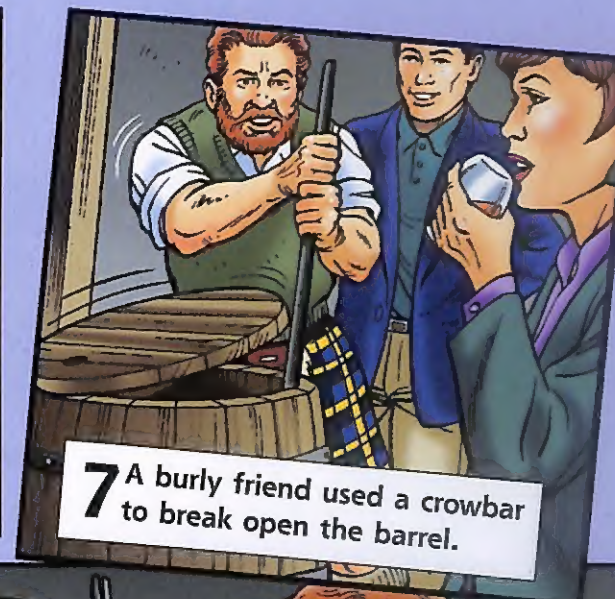


**5** Old friends and new neighbours were invited, and were very impressed by the vintage brandy.

**6** The hosts were puzzled when the brandy seemed to run out, even though the barrel still felt heavy.



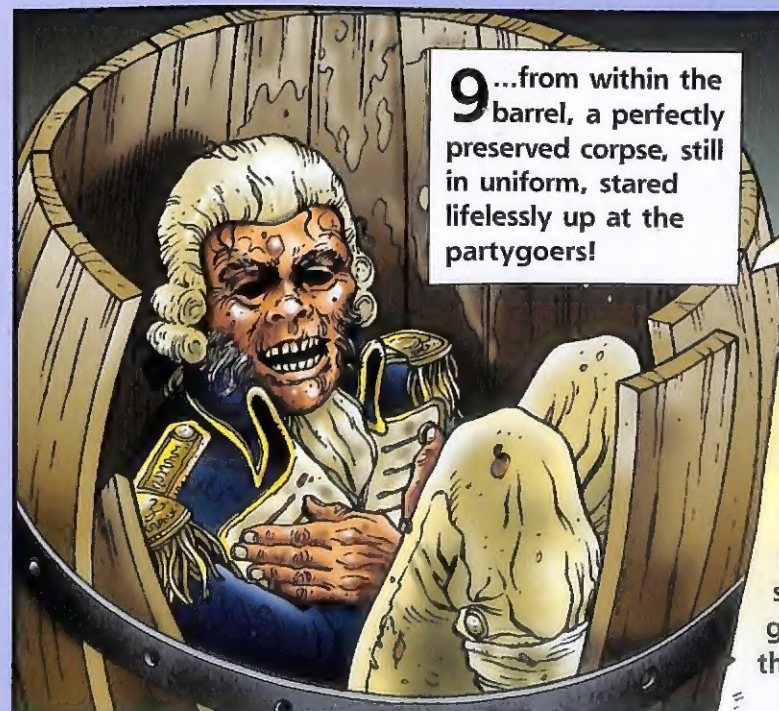
**7** A burly friend used a crowbar to break open the barrel.



**8** The guests gasped and shrieked in horror at the hideous sight lying before them...



**9** ...from within the barrel, a perfectly preserved corpse, still in uniform, stared lifelessly up at the partygoers!



**PS** The police later told the couple that in the olden days, when an officer with the foreign service died while abroad, the body was often shipped home in a barrel of brandy. The alcohol prevented the body rotting during what could be a very long voyage home. It seems that the couple's uninvited guest had been pickled long before the party started!





# THE GHOST DETECTIVES



Evidence no: 42/1  
Paul Southcott (front) and other members of the USS

## Special Investigation File: 42

**Subject:** tracking the ghosts that haunt the London Dungeon museum

**Place:** Southwark, London, England

SpineChiller creates a file

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The London Dungeon is an underground museum of historical horrors, from Jack the Ripper to medieval torture. But now it is investigating a modern mystery. Since it opened in 1975, warders have witnessed strange phenomena. Some have even glimpsed ghostly figures wandering the corridors.

In 1998, the museum managers decided to find out if the Dungeon really was haunted. So they called in Paul Southcott of the Ufology and Supernatural Society (USS). They asked him and his team to use their ghost-detecting machine to get some answers. They did just that and came up with some very intriguing results.



Evidence no: 42/2  
The USS with the 'Gizmo' and one of the Indian skeletons

## MYSTERIOUS MACHINE

Here are the details you requested about the machine used by the USS in their London Dungeon investigations.

**Name:** The Gizmo

**Inventor:** Professor Stephen Clemence

**Purpose:** To detect ghosts

**Method of operation:** The 'Gizmo' measures changes in electro-magnetic density, which its inventor claims is an indication of ghostly activity. If major changes occur, the machine screeches and flashes its lights.

Dear Zoe

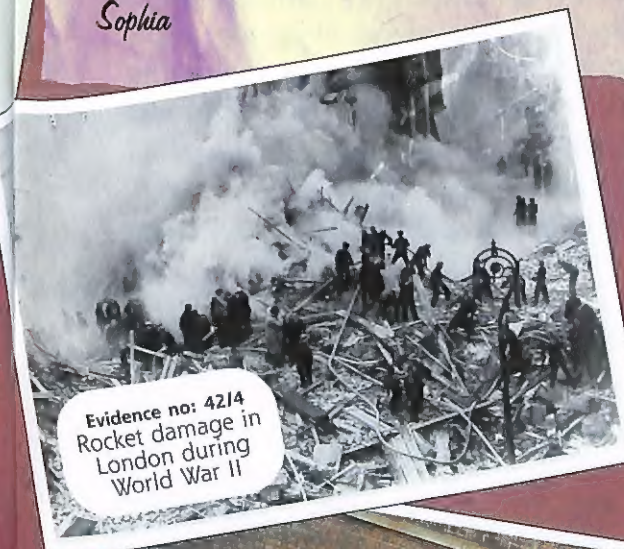
May 15, 1998

Have you heard what happened when ghost-busters went to the London Dungeon last week? Apparently their 'Gizmo' machine went wild, especially on the boat ride, the site of many reported apparitions. The ride, which takes visitors past reconstructions of a medieval torture chamber and gallows, also mysteriously broke down three times.

Investigator Paul Southcott made videos of his journey around the building, too. They are said to contain images of a floating head and of a dungeon skeleton. Spookily, the skeleton has gained flesh and a face.

*Will we ever dare visit the museum again?*

Sophia

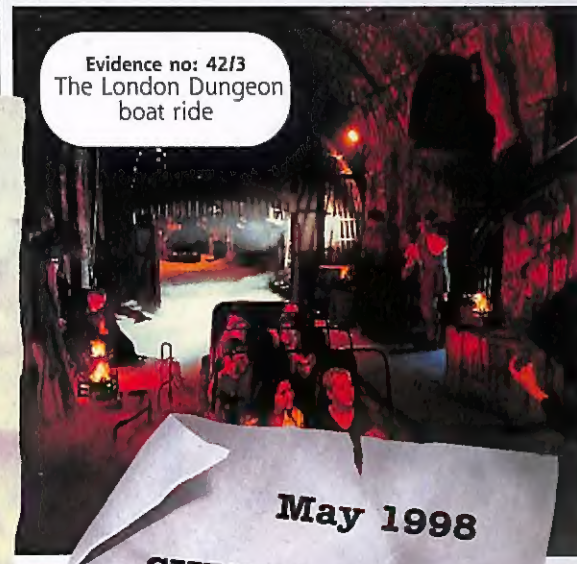


Evidence no: 42/4  
Rocket damage in London during World War II



Evidence no: 42/5  
The London Dungeon today

Evidence no: 42/3  
The London Dungeon boat ride



May 1998

## SUPERNATURAL SOLUTIONS?

Investigators have proposed two main theories to explain the hauntings that seem to be taking place at the London Dungeon.

It may be that the ghosts are in fact the spirits of people killed nearby during World War II. On February 17, 1941, a massive German bomb crashed through London Bridge station into an air-raid shelter below. Of the 300 victims, more than 60 died. Many were children.

Another theory is that the ghosts come from ancient Indian skeletons. These have been stored in the museum for the past 10 years. Over the coming months, investigators will be doing their best to find out which theory is true - or if there is a completely different explanation.

Unexplained

## CONCLUSION

Are there really ghosts in the London Dungeon? And if so, who are they? No one yet knows, but the USS is urgently continuing its investigations to find out.





## Chapter 2

# The Canterville Ghost

Retold from a story by Oscar Wilde

The next morning when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present of oil had not been accepted.

"I have no wish," he said, "to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him."

This was a very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter.

"Upon the other hand," Mr Otis continued, "if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Oil, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be impossible to sleep with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms."

For the rest of the week, however, the Otises were undisturbed, although the bloodstain on the library floor was continually renewed, in many different colours. Some mornings it was red, others it was purple, and once a bright emerald-green. These changes amused the party very much. But Virginia did not enter into

the joke. She was always distressed at the sight of the blood, and nearly cried the morning it was green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after the Otises had gone to bed, they were alarmed by a crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a suit of armour had fallen from its stand onto the stone floor. Nearby, seated in a chair, was the Canterville Ghost.

He was rubbing his knees with an expression of agony on his face.



The twins at once fired two pellets at him with their pea-shooters.

The ghost started up with a shriek of rage and swept through them. He extinguished Washington Otis's candle as he passed, leaving them all in total darkness. At the top of the staircase, he recovered himself and gave a peal of evil laughter. But hardly had the echo died away when a door opened and Mrs Otis came out. "I am afraid you are far from well," she said, "and have brought you a bottle of Dr Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy."

The ghost glared at her in fury, and began to make preparations for turning himself into a black dog. But the sound of approaching footsteps made him hesitate, so he just glowed strangely. Then, just as the twins came up to him, he vanished with a deep groan.

On reaching his room, the ghost broke down in sobs. The actions of the twins and Mrs Otis had been annoying. But he was distressed above all because he had been unable to wear the suit of armour.

He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a spectre in armour. Besides, it was the suit that he had worn while still alive. Yet when he had put it on, he had been overpowered by its great weight and fallen on the stone floor, grazing his knees and bruising his right hand.

For some days after this the ghost was ill and hardly stirred from his room, except to renew the bloodstain. However, he recovered and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the Otises. He spent almost a day looking over his wardrobe to find the ideal outfit. In the end, he chose a large hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet and a rusty dagger.



Towards evening, a violent storm came on. It was the type of weather that the ghost loved. He planned to make his way to Washington's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, then stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of slow music. He bore Washington a special grudge, because he had removed the famous Canterville bloodstain.

The ghost planned to visit the room of the minister and his wife next. He would place a clammy hand on Mrs Otis's forehead, while hissing terrifying secrets into her husband's ear. He had not made up his mind about Virginia. She had never insulted him and was pretty and gentle. A few groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be enough.

As for the twins, he was determined to teach them a lesson. First, he would sit on their chests to produce a stifling sensation. Then he would stand between their beds in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralysed with fear. Finally, he would throw off the winding-sheet and crawl around, with white bones and one rolling eyeball on show.

At half-past ten the ghost heard the family going to bed. By a quarter past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he went on his way. The wind wandered moaning round the house. But



the Otis family slept unconscious of their doom. High above the rain and storm, he could hear the steady snoring of the United States minister.

The ghost stepped stealthily out of the wall with a wicked smile on his cruel mouth. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow. Finally, he reached the corner of the passage that led to Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long grey locks about his head. Then the clock struck quarter past midnight, and he decided the time had come.

The ghost chuckled and turned the corner. But then, with a wail of terror, he fell back and hid his pale face in his hands. Right in front of him was a monstrous spectre! Its head was bald, its face round and white. Hideous laughter stretched its

features into a grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, its mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment covered its huge form. On its breast was a placard covered in old-fashioned writing. With its right hand it held up a steel sword.

Never having seen another phantom before, the Canterville Ghost was frightened, and fled back to his room. Once in his own apartment, he flung himself down on the bed. After a time, however, he decided to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. So, as dawn was breaking, he returned to the spot where he had seen the phantom. He felt that, with his new friend, he might even be able to deal with the twins.

On reaching the place, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. The light had faded from the spectre's eyes, the sword had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning against the wall in a peculiar position. The Canterville Ghost seized the figure in his arms. To his horror, the head slipped off and rolled on the floor, the body fell over, and he found himself clasping a white curtain, with a

sweeping brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip at his feet! Then he grabbed the placard and read these words:

*YE OTIS GHOSTE.  
Ye Onlie True and Originale Spook.  
Beware of Ye Imitationes.  
All Others are Counterfeite.*

He had been tricked by the twins! He ground his toothless gums together and swore that, after the cock crew twice, he would commit murder.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when the cock crew. He laughed and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock did not crow again. At half past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his vigil, and he stalked back to his room. He cursed the cock for its failure to crow once more, then retired to a coffin and stayed there till evening.

The next day the ghost was weak and tired. For five days he stayed in his room, and at last made up his mind not to renew the bloodstain. If the Otis family did not want it, they did not deserve it. But he felt that it remained his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large window on the first and third Wednesday in every month.

For the next three Saturdays, he walked along the corridor between midnight and three o'clock as usual, but now tried not to be heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible, wore a black velvet cloak, and was even careful to smear his chains with the Rising Sun Oil, which he had stolen from Mr Otis's bedroom.

But the twins still played tricks on him. He tripped over strings that they had



stretched across the corridor and once fell after treading on a butter-slide that they had constructed. This last insult so enraged him that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity. He decided to visit the young men the next night in the form of a headless earl.

## WORD POWER

tincture – a liquid medicine

winding-sheet – a sheet used to wrap a corpse

gibber – utter streams of meaningless sounds

clammy – moist and sticky

stealthily – acting with stealth; in a secret or furtive manner

cleaver – a large, heavy knife

vigil – a watch, especially during the night





# ANIMAL GHOSTS

The British have a reputation for loving their pets, but it's going a bit far when dead animals decide to come back for a ghostly visit to the family.

Reports of phantom pets are not particularly spinechilling – although it must have been somewhat unnerving for the owners of Smoky, the blue Persian cat, to see her padding across the lawn three weeks after she was buried in the garden. Indeed, after a day of sightings, the gardener was so incensed by the suspicion that he had not buried the much-loved moggy that he dug up the grave and presented her body!

## PHOTO PHANTOMS

Shortly after photography became widely used in the early 1900s, there was a spate of phantom pet pictures.

A family photo, taken in 1925, showed a white kitten in a young boy's hand, nestling against the toy rabbit he was holding. Nothing strange in that, you might think. But, the little boy had not been holding a kitten! The ghostly gatecrasher was later identified as the family's kitten that had died some weeks earlier.

Another extraordinary picture, taken in 1926, featured a puppy's head appearing at the rear end of a pet wolfhound.

However, as photographic processing became more sophisticated, phantom pet pictures became rarer!



## ◀ FIRM FRIENDS

Lady Hehir and her pet dog out on a favourite walk. When the photo was developed, a mysterious hitchhiker was discovered. Popping up on the hindquarters of the wolfhound was its puppy pal who had died six weeks before.

## GREAT ESCAPE

Tales of animal heroism are not unusual – but what about ghostly heroism. A story from the 1930s involved two girls who narrowly escaped drowning. Cut off by the incoming tide, they were led to safety by a small black dog with white paws and one white ear.

Spookily he didn't leave

pawprints and appeared to skid over the water.

The girls' friends laughed off the idea of a ghostly dog coming to their rescue, until they heard the story of a dog that had

been swept out to sea with its five-year-old owner forty years earlier. A little black dog with white paws and one white ear had tried unsuccessfully to rescue the little girl. Luckily, this rescue attempt was more successful.

## ▼ A HAPPY HOME

A kitten makes an unexpected appearance in a family snapshot: it had died some weeks before the picture was taken.



◀ **BUFFALO WARRIORS**  
After a buffalo hunt, American Indians performed a dance to honour the spirits of the dead beasts.

## ANIMAL WORLD

In different parts of the world, animal spooks are not so friendly. Some cultures, who depend on hunting animals for their survival, believe the spirits of the creatures they kill should be honoured. American Indians performed special ceremonies after buffalo hunts in case the remaining herd were offended and moved away.

The Lengua tribe of South America still have a special ritual after they kill a rhea (a flightless bird, a bit like an ostrich). On the way back to the village, they drop clumps of rhea feathers to distract the spirit of the bird which they believe is pursuing them with deadly intent.

## FEARSOME FELINE

It's not just wild animal ghosts that are unfriendly, however, as the owner of an Art Centre in a small town near Dublin, in the Republic of Ireland, discovered. On her arrival in 1968, Mrs O'Brien was warned of a ghostly 'monstrous black cat with red-flecked amber eyes'. She put the stories down to superstition, until she herself was confronted with an animal the size of a biggish dog which suddenly appeared in the hall when all the outside doors were locked!

## SOW SAD

One unusual animal haunting involves a ghostly white pig that was seen accompanying a woman down a lane in the village of Hoe Benham in England in 1907. On another occasion, the same woman walking, with friends, down the same lane was overcome by a feeling of suffocation; she and her two friends were then chilled by the sound of its 'unearthly scream'. Villagers claimed that a pig and other animal apparitions had been sighted in that particular spot. They put it down to the suicide of a farmer in that area. This pig didn't act maliciously – but it certainly didn't seem too happy!



▲ **DOG DAYS**  
A ghostly white greyhound was believed by the villagers of Berri, France, to jump on the back of lonely travellers.



# SLIME CITY PUZZLES

## SLIME STREET

Spotty the slimer is approaching the red door on Slime Street. He is confused as it hasn't got a number. There are four numbers it could be. Can you work them out?

GROSS

## RIVER RUBBISH

The river of slime the rubbish is floating on is a mixture of all sorts of horrible things. If you sort out the rubbish, you'll be able to name four icky ingredients. (Write down the first letter of each piece of rubbish and rearrange the letters to form four words.)

## PICK A BRICK

Which brick is the odd one out?

	A	B	C	D	
E	+	o	△	□	⊕
F	⊕	△	+	o	□
G	△	+	o	□	⊕
H	⊕	△	+	o	□
A	B	C	D		

## FREAKY FACTS

On the wooden floor of the Chapel Room in Bosworth Hall, Leicestershire, a stain of either blood or wine, made over 300 years ago, still feels damp to the touch.

## FOUL FACTS

On May 5, 1786, it rained black eggs on Port-au-Prince, Haiti. These eggs hatched the next day and the creatures that came out were like tadpoles but they shed their skin several times.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Take two letters from the name of each slimer to make up the name of a group of animals that leave slimy trails.

HEADS

GAPER

BLAST THOSE BOILS

23

22

32

33

42

41

40

51

50



## FANTASTIC FACTS

Something that looked like butter fell over large areas of southern Ireland in the winter of 1696. It fell in lumps and was soft, clammy, dark yellow and smelled horrible.

## PUZZLE PIECES

Hidden in the dome are five shapes, the numbers of which add up to 45 and which, when put together, make up a slimy creature. Can you work out it? It may be easier to trace the shapes, cut them out and fit the pieces together.

## SLIP AND SLIDE

Can you ride the slime waterfall to make three more words from the letters of SLIME?

### ANSWERS

RIVER RUBBISH: blood/gore/drool/pus. Take the first letter of each item in the river and rearrange the letters into the four main ingredients of this particular river! Box, log, ool, olion, rot, ear, dollor, rake, oimment, octopus, lolipop, pointbush, umbrello, pus. SLIME STREET: 3, 30, 24, 12. When the digits of the house number are added together, they amount to the number of letters in the colour of the front door. 3+0 = 3 RED has three letters. PICK A BRICK: GB is the only brick with a repeated symbol. WHAT'S IN A NAME?: GASTROPODS Gaper, pest, gRass spOry headS. SLIP AND SLIDE: smile/miles/times. PUZZLE PIECES: pieces 3, 5, 7, 14 and 19 make up a snail.